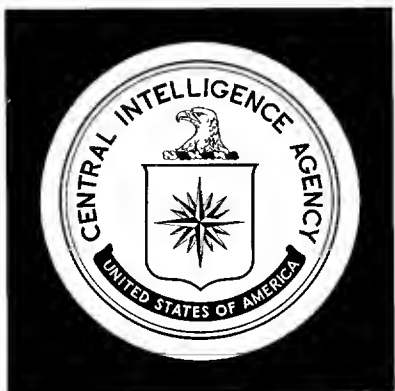


**Top Secret**



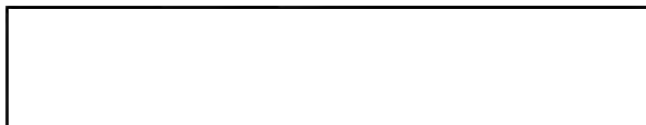
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# *Central Intelligence Bulletin*

**Top Secret**

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15 April 1972



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25X1

Approved For Release 2003/05/21 : CIA-RDP79T00975A021700010002-8

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15 April 1972

# *Central Intelligence Bulletin*

## CONTENTS

25X1

THAILAND: Growing strains in leadership increase government's indecisiveness. (Page 6)

25X1

ROMANIA: Bid for US grain (Page 14)

25X1

**Next 5 Page(s) In Document Exempt**

THAILAND: Growing strains within the top leadership are contributing to the government's drift and indecisiveness.

Field Marshal Thanom, chairman of the ruling National Executive Council (NEC), and his deputy, General Praphat, have been openly at odds over when to promulgate an interim constitution and name a cabinet. Although the two men have frequently differed on policy issues during the almost eight years that they have ruled Thailand, their cordial personal relationship appears to be breaking down. Communication between the two has grown more distant in recent weeks.

25X1

In a public display of the division at the top, Praphat has refuted Thanom's earlier announcement that a new constitution will be promulgated during April. Praphat apparently would like to stall on the new arrangement until Thanom's term as supreme military commander expires at the end of September, which would open the way for Praphat's assumption of the top military post. With the backing of other influential members of the ruling clique, Praphat seems to be winning, although there is some sentiment for organizing a new government by June, when the students return from summer vacation.

The military leaders are concerned about student reaction if the government reneges on its promise to return to constitutional rule. The leadership is finding it increasingly difficult to make a convincing case that the present arrangement is giving efficient or dynamic direction to the country. The deterioration in relations between Thanom and Praphat also runs the risk of stirring up latent discontent among younger officers who have long chafed under the old guard's reluctance to pass on the leadership.

25X1

15 Apr 72

Central Intelligence Bulletin

6

**Next 8 Page(s) In Document Exempt**

ROMANIA: Bucharest is seeking one million tons of grain worth about \$60 million--in equal quantities of wheat and corn--from the US on liberal credit terms. The request underscores the potential seriousness of crop shortfalls and Romanian concern over the impact of additional imports on its already large hard-currency indebtedness. Low soil moisture has reduced yields for both winter wheat and barley, and winterkill damage may already have reduced output by as much as one million tons of wheat. Concern about the prospects for corn may be premature as the crop is only now being planted and normal rainfall in the coming months could result in a good harvest. If there is a shortfall in corn output, which is used largely as feedgrain, Romania's efforts to expand livestock production for export could be seriously damaged.

25X1

15 Apr 72

Central Intelligence Bulletin

14

25X1

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